

In the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Original) A cutting frame for a cheese vat for at least preparing curd for soft fresh cheese, which cutting frame comprises a cutting wire system, and has a frame having at least two opposite frame parts between which cutting wire sections extend, which frame parts are provided with openings for receiving a cutting wire, wherein the ends of a cutting wire are each fastened via pull relief means.

2. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 1, wherein the length of a cutting wire is great compared to the length of a cutting wire section.

3. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 2, wherein a cutting wire comprises five or more, preferably 10 or more cutting wire sections.

4. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 3, wherein a cutting wire comprises between 20 and 30 cutting wire sections.

5. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 1, wherein the pull relief means comprise at least one edge of at least one opening in a frame part.

6. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 1, wherein the pull relief means comprise an opening in a pull relief element provided on the frame.

7. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 1, wherein the pull relief means comprise a rod-shaped element, which is attached to the frame, wherein a cutting wire end has been wrapped over at least a part of the circumference of the rod-shaped element.

8. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 1, wherein the ends of a cutting wire are interconnected by means of a wire-connecting element.

9. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 8, wherein the wire-connecting element comprises a closable housing, inside which the cutting wire ends have been fastened.

10. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 8, wherein the wire-connecting element comprises a floating block of rustproof steel on which the cutting wire ends have been fastened.

11. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 1, wherein the cutting wire ends have been fastened by welding.

12. (Currently Amended) A cutting frame according to claim 1, wherein the opposite frame parts are provided with a number of series of openings located next to one another in a row for receiving a cutting wire, wherein, ~~near the outer openings of each series,~~ the pull relief means have been provided on one of the frame parts, and pull relief means have been provided via which the corresponding cutting wire ends have been led through the pull relief means, wherein the cutting wire ends have been welded down on the respective frame part beyond the pull relief means.

13. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 12, wherein the pull relief means comprise at least one edge of the frame part.

14. (Currently Amended) A cutting frame according to claim 12, wherein each of the series of openings includes an outer opening at each end of each of the series of openings, and the pull relief means comprise at least one extra opening provided near each outer opening, wherein a cutting wire end has first been led through one of the said outer openings and has subsequently been led through the at least one extra opening, and the cutting wire end reaching beyond the extra opening has been welded down.

15. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 14, wherein, between the exit of the extra opening and the welding site, the cutting wire end reaching beyond the extra opening has been bent around at least one edge of the frame part and/or of the further opening provided in it.

16. (Original) A cutting frame according to claim 15, wherein the cutting wire ends have been welded down without addition of separate welding material.

17. (Original) A cutting frame according claim 1, wherein a cutting wire end shows a change of direction of the order of approximately 90° or more between the neighboring cutting section of the respective cutting wire and the site where the cutting wire end has been fastened.

18. (Original) A cheese vat for at least preparing curd for soft fresh cheese comprising at least one cutting frame according to claim 1.

19. (New) A cutting frame for a cheese vat for at least preparing curd for soft fresh cheese, said cutting frame comprising:

at least two opposite frame parts, at least one of said frame parts having an opening for receiving a cutting wire;

a cutting wire having a first end and a second end, said cutting wire extending from said first end between at least two of said at least two frame parts and through said opening to said second end, said second end of said cutting wire being secured relative to said frame;

pull relief means engaging said cutting wire between said opening and said second end of said cutting wire to relieve a pulling force on said second end of said cutting wire.

20. (New) The cutting frame as in claim 19, in which said second end of said cutting wire is secured relative to said frame by a weld.